

Department of Information Culture
and Data Stewardship

Developing a Statement of Teaching Philosophy

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What Is a Statement of Teaching Philosophy?

“A teaching philosophy statement is a concise, compelling illustration of you as an instructor, a useful reflexive examination of your teaching, and a necessary component of many academic job applications”

(University Center for
Teaching & Learning,
2017)





Workshop Outline

- Introduction and orientation
 - definition and scope of a teaching philosophy statement
- Activity 1
 - articulating your beliefs about learning and teaching
- Activity 2
 - articulating your goals for learning
- Activity 3
 - articulating your style of teaching
- Activity 4
 - articulating your practices
- Review and conclusion



What is the Scope of a Teaching Statement?

- Developed through individual reflection, but often with peer support/feedback, and usually intended for a wider audience
- Written in the first person, typically 1-2 pages (1,000 words)
- Used in job applications, promotion cases, grant submissions, course syllabi, personal webpages, strategy documents, etc.
- Key components include your beliefs and thoughts about
 - how learning occurs and how a teacher can facilitate or intervene,
 - what goals you have for your students (e.g., knowledge/skills/abilities),
 - how you prefer to behave and interact with learners, and
 - what methods of instruction, assessment, and evaluation you use.
- Give specific personal examples to illustrate your practices and explain the disciplinary/institutional context of your work
- Include quotes or references to illuminate points if applicable



Activity 1

– articulating your beliefs about learning and teaching

1. Complete the following sentence:

For me, learning occurs best when...

2. Consider the following questions:

How can a teacher facilitate or intervene in the learning process to help learning to occur?

Who or what has influenced, informed or inspired your approach to teaching?



Orientations to Teaching and Learning

Teaching-centred or Learning-centred?

Teaching/learning orientation of academic teachers	Desired learning outcomes	Expected use of knowledge
Imparting information	Recall of atomised information	Within subject
Transmitting structured knowledge	Reproductive understanding	Within subject for future use
Providing and facilitating understanding		
Helping students develop expertise	Change in ways of thinking	Interpretation of reality
Preventing misunderstandings		
Negotiating understanding		
Encouraging knowledge creation		

(Extracted and adapted from Samuelowicz & Bain, 2001, p. 306)

“From sage on the stage to guide on the side” (King, 1993, p. 30)



Intention and Strategy Components for Five Approaches to Teaching

	Strategy		
Intention	Teacher-focused	Student-teacher interaction	Student-focused
Information transmission	A		
Concept acquisition	B	C	
Conceptual development			D
Conceptual change			E

(Trigwell & Prosser, 2004, p. 413)



'Ike loa: a list of influential books shaping the instruction librarian's teaching and learning philosophy

List of influential
books

David J. Brier and Vickery Kaye Lebbin
University of Hawaii, Manoa, Hawaii, USA

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The organizers of the 2006 LOEX-of-the-West conference for instruction librarians invited each attendee to share the title of one or two books that have influenced their instruction activities, teaching philosophy, or meaning of education and then to briefly describe the significance of the book(s).

So, which books influence teaching in LIS?



Which Books Influence Your Teaching?

- Palmer, P. J. (1998). *The courage to teach: Exploring the inner landscape of a teacher's life*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. [15]
- Grassian, E. S., & Kaplowitz, J. R. (2001). *Information literacy instruction: Theory and practice*. New York: Neal-Schuman. [9]
- Freire, P. (1970/2000). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Herder & Herder. [6]
- Angelo, T. A., & Cross, K. P. (1993). *Classroom assessment techniques: A handbook for college teachers* (2nd ed.). San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers. [6]
- Rockman, I. F. (2004). *Integrating information literacy into the higher education curriculum: Practical models for transformation*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass. [6]
- Jacobson, T. E., & Xu, L. (2004). *Motivating students in information literacy classes*. New York: Neal-Schuman. [5]
- LaGuardia, C., & Oka, C. K. (2000). *Becoming a library teacher*. New York: Neal-Schuman. [5]
- Weimer, M. (2002). *Learner-centered teaching: Five key changes to practice*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass. [5]
- Bain, K. (2004). *What the best college teachers do*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. [4]
- Kuhlthau, C. C. (2004). *Seeking meaning: A process approach to library and information services* (2nd ed.). Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited. [4]



Which Books Influence My Teaching?

Cunningham, I. (1999). *The wisdom of strategic learning: The self managed learning solution* (2nd ed.). Aldershot, UK: Gower.

Kolb, D. A. (2015). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development* (2nd ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

Boyer, E. L. (1990). *Scholarship reconsidered: Priorities of the professoriate*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey Bass.

Biggs, J., & Tang, C. (2011). *Teaching for quality learning at university: What the student does* (4th ed.). Maidenhead, UK: McGraw-Hill Society for Research into Higher Education & Open University Press.

Levy, P., Little, S., McKinney, P., Nibbs, A., & Wood, J. (2010). *The Sheffield companion to inquiry-based learning*. Sheffield, UK: University of Sheffield, Centre for Inquiry-based Learning in the Arts and Social Sciences.

Anderson, L. W., & Krathwohl, D. R. (Eds.) (2001). *A taxonomy for learning, teaching, and assessing: A revision of Bloom's taxonomy of educational objectives*. New York: Longman.

Vai, M., & Sosulski, K. (2016). *Essentials of online course design: A standards-based guide* (2nd ed). New York; Abingdon, UK: Routledge.

Wiggins, G., & McTighe, J. (2005). *Understanding by design* (2nd ed.). Alexandria, VA: ASCD (Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development).

(Corrall, 2014; 2016)



What Keywords Characterize My Teaching?

Flexibility – Personalization – Real-world engagement
Co-curricular activities (University of Pittsburgh MLIS)

- Self-managed learning (Cunningham, 1999)
- Experiential learning (Kolb, 1986)
- Constructive alignment (Biggs & Tang, 2011)
- Inquiry-based learning (Levy et al., 2010)
- Backwards design (Wiggins & McTighe, 2005)
- Cognitive scaffolding (Cooper et al., 2003)

Authentic assignments – Deep discussion – Formative feedback
Holistic grading – Transparent teaching (Winkelmes, 2016)

***“Modelling the process of research
within the student learning experience”***



Pitt

Inquiry-based Learning Modes and Levels

Discovery
frame

inquiry for
knowledge
building:
building
new
knowledge

Key



problem-based



more support



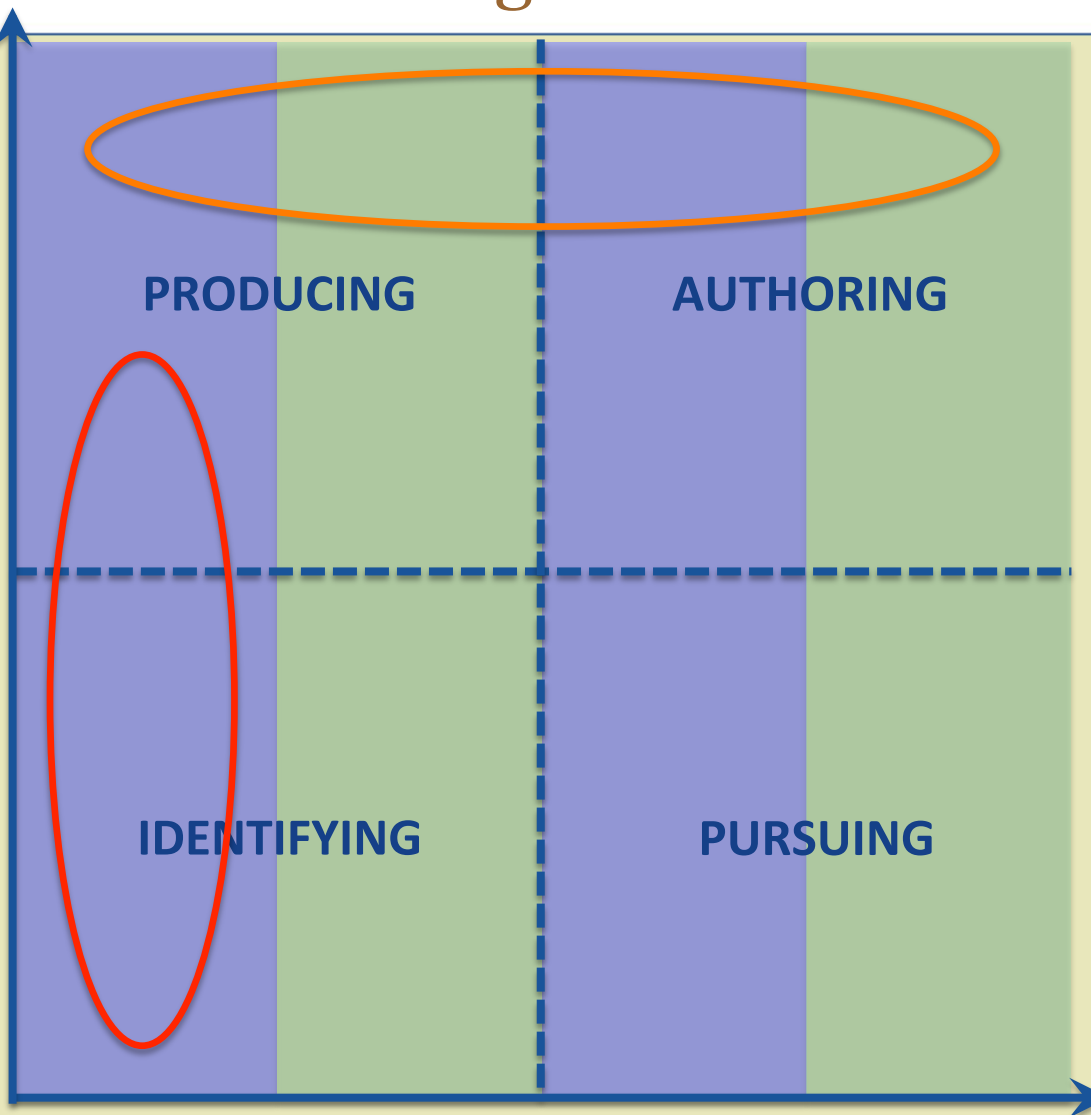
less support



student research

Information
frame

inquiry for
learning:
exploring
existing
knowledge



(Levy et al., 2010, p. 8)

tutor/client-framed inquiry

student-framed inquiry



Goals

“In your statement of teaching philosophy, you should not only consider what subject matter items you think students should learn, but also some of the broader issues that add value to the education students can be expected to obtain by working with you. You might also consider the question of why these goals are important...” (Coppola, 2002, p. 449)

Consider also how your goals should be expressed, e.g.,

- what students should know
- what students should be able to do
- how they would use their knowledge, skills and abilities



Activity 2

– articulating your goals for learners learning

1. Consider the following question:
What goals do you have for students as
 - *learners in the specific subject matter*
 - *learners in general*
2. Complete the following sentence:
As a result of working with me, my students develop...



Activity 3

– articulating your style of teaching or learning facilitation

1. Consider the following question:
How do you see your relationship with the learners you work with?
2. Complete the following sentence:
As a teacher, I prefer to be...



Activity 4

– articulating your practices

1. Consider the following questions:
What methods do you use to support and assess learning?
How do you evaluate your teaching?
2. Complete the following sentence:
Methods I often use include...



Examples of Beliefs, Goals, Styles, and Practices Associated with Educator Roles

Educator role	Beliefs: <i>"Learning occurs best when..."</i>	Goals: <i>"My students develop..."</i>	Style: <i>"As a teacher, I prefer to be..."</i>	Practices: <i>"Instructional forms I often use include..."</i>
Facilitator	It begins with the learners experience	Empathy and understanding of others	Creative, warm, affirming	Class discussion, journals, personal stories
Expert	New concepts are integrated into existing mental frameworks	Analytic and conceptual abilities	Logical, authoritative	Lectures, readings, written assignments
Evaluator	Clear standards and feedback are provided	Problem-solving skills	Structured, outcome-oriented, objective	Laboratories, graded homework assignments
Coach	It takes place in a real-life context	Ability to work productively with others	Applied, collaborative, risk-taking	Field projects, role-plays, simulations

"teaching is above all a profound human relationship" (Kolb et al., 2014, pp. 218, 222)



References [see Readings & Resource List for full details of citations]

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